

Statement

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STATEMENT FROM USFK ON COURTS-MARTIAL

SEOUL, Republic of Korea (USFK) Nov. 26, 2002-The media reports and public reaction to the recently concluded courts-martial proceedings concerning the June 13th accident clearly point out how deeply this tragedy has affected both the Korean people and the U.S. military community.

"The sorrow we all feel is still very strong," stated Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, USFK Commander. "We again apologize to all of the Korean people, and we can only hope that time will ease the pain in the hearts of the families and friends of Ms. Shim, Mi-Sun and Ms. Shin, Hyo-Son."

Although the procedures followed in the courts martial were consistent with our long-standing and widely accepted U.S. military judicial process, it is clear that the process is not clearly understood by many in the Korean community. USFK is providing a fact sheet on the U.S. military judicial process to clarify aspects of the process that may not be clear to many people in the Korean public.

"It's vitally important that the Korean people realize that the trials were not only open, but that the U.S. military judicial system is fair and impartial," said LaPorte. "USFK did everything we could to make the trials as open as possible to the Korean public. We must now do everything we can to make sure that process is clearly understood."

Measures were taken to ensure the trial was open to the family members, Korean governmental representatives, the media, and other interested parties. However, the differences in the U.S. and Korean legal systems resulted in questions that must be addressed in order for the Korean people to gain confidence in the judicial process that occurred in both trials.